

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) released the following statement after being one of only 18 “no” votes on H.R. 3631, the Medicare Premium Fairness Act:

“I was dismayed by this fiscally irresponsible Congressional raid on Medicare funds of \$2.8 billion.”

H.R. 3631 raided the Medicare trust fund and funds designated for improving Medicare efficiency to artificially freeze regularly scheduled Medicare premium increases.

Because Social Security benefits will remain stable, due to a period of negative inflation (CPI of -1.5% over last 12 months), 75 percent of Medicare recipients would have already avoided premium increases under existing law.

An additional 18 percent of Medicare recipients, those with low incomes, would not pay the increased premium because they are also enrolled in Medicaid, which already covers the cost of their Medicare premium.

About 2 percent of Medicare recipients will not see an increase because they are new enrollees.

The \$2.8 billion taken from Medicare funds will provide an extra benefit to only 5 percent of Medicare enrollees – 2.1 million people – whose incomes were above \$85,000 for individuals or \$170,000 for couples, to avoid a premium increase averaging \$12 a month. These Medicare recipients already received a \$250 stimulus payment and 5.8 percent COLA increase in their Social Security benefits in 2009, which more than covers the differential.

“Congress proved yesterday an incapability to ever say ‘no’ to special interests, even when there’s no fiscal sense in it,” Bean said.